

**Minutes of the Meeting of the  
Justice + Peace Group  
Church of St Augustine of Hippo  
Thursday, 6 May 2010**

**Present** Angela Alderman, Patricia Kotwinski, John Ballard

**Apologies** Dot O'Shea

**CAFOD** This year's Lenten Alms had been very successful. Almost £500 had been raised for CAFOD, which was a considerable improvement on the amounts raised for Lenten alms in previous years. The "bicycles for health visitors" idea had appealed to people's imagination and more than made up for the lower than usual amount collected after the Lent Fast Day. Overall, however, several hundred pounds more were received for CAFOD this Lent. The group felt that parishioners should be thanked for their generosity.

The CAFOD envelopes/leaflets had proved confusing and the group hoped that CAFOD would improve in their communication in future, both on a diocesan and a national basis.

**FOSTAH** News of developments in St Austell is still awaited. The signs are encouraging, however, and FOSTAH expect St Petroc's to make an announcement in the near future.

**STAK** STAK is still operating at 'Cornerstones' and is very grateful to the Baptist Church for allowing them stay on while they seek new premises. Plans to set up a new centre in High Cross Street have obtained the support of St Austell Town Council and the STAK committee are optimistic that approval will be forthcoming from Cornwall council.

John reported that the Chair of STAK had asked if someone from their committee could make a presentation to the PCG and it seems this may be possible at the June meeting. This might also be of interest to other interested parties in the parish.

Regarding talks to parishioners: St Petroc's have expressed a wish to come and talk about their plans in St Austell and Richard from St Petroc's is due to speak after the Sunday 10.30 mass (date to be decided).

**DCRSC** Dot had taken a consignment of food from the basket after Easter – for which they were very grateful.

**ANTI-SLAVERY** Angela suggested we get more involved in the campaign to end domestic slavery called "Home Alone". It is a postcard campaign targeting the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions. Angela would be prepared to send for cards and arrange distribution. It was agreed that as a group we ought to do more campaigning.

**FAIRTRADE** Patricia felt that people needed to be reminded that injustice still features widely in the chocolate industry. It was proposed that we write to Cadbury to say that since 'Dairy Milk' chocolate is now 'fairtrade', it would make sense to make Cadbury's Cream Eggs fairly traded also. We could also enquire what plans Cadbury have with regard to fairly traded Easter eggs.

**FUTURE OF J+P AT ST AUGUSTINE'S** There followed a discussion about how best the J+P group could function within the parish.

The following points were made:

1. 10 years ago the "Covenant with the Poor" was brought out in the Diocese and the newly formed J+P group took it up, adapted it for the parish and got it adopted. It became a 'blue print' for action.
2. Over the years the activities of the J+P group have reflected the interests and priorities of individual members. Ideas were put forward and then put to the parish and parishioners' support was sought – with varying degrees of success.

Ideas such as:

- Helping Romanian orphans
- Campaigning against poverty (Make Poverty History) (Live Simply)
- Combating slavery
- Encouraging Fair Trade – especially in the chocolate industry
- Supporting Amnesty International – especially victims of torture
- Engaging with the problems of homelessness
- Supporting charities working with street children
- Working for Shelterbox
- Helping particular religious orders working in the missions
- Supporting Refugees and Asylum Seekers
- Supporting a parishioner working in Africa (M-J Butler)
- Providing tools for students of plumbing in Angola
- Seeing Adelina through her nursing studies in Africa
- Campaigning for justice in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict
- Helping provide holidays for poor inner-city children
- Supporting the work of Pax Christi
- Apostleship of the Sea

These activities, together with work for CAFOD, have been promoted through

- Information dissemination (via displays, leaflets, meetings, talks/presentations etc.)
  - Campaigning (attending rallies, meetings, writing letters, postcard campaigns etc.)
  - Fundraising (events e.g. fair-trade café, appeals, sponsored runs, collecting provisions, clothing and gifts for homeless and refugees via the 'basket' and Advent Tree etc.)
3. Because much of the above can be perceived to emanate from a small group of people this work can be seen by some as being:-

- a) peripheral to the life of the parish by those who are not interested in Justice and Peace issues
  - b) of little concern to the majority as the matter is already being dealt with by the J+P group
  - c) an irritation from a group of do-gooders (who are probably politically inspired)
  - d) a drain on the parish resources
  - e) a source of clutter in the church and narthex interfering with the smooth running of the parish and its liturgy.
4. The group therefore feel that the work of 'Justice and Peace' will be better served if it is more fully 'owned' by the parish and made more fully an expression of our "Caring Church". The work could become a ministry of the parish – the parish's social justice ministry – which the group would be happy to co-ordinate on behalf of the parish – and more specifically, the PCG.
  5. When the J+P group last met Bishop Christopher during his visitation the role of the J+P group was discussed and he was told that members sometimes felt they were something of a 'thorn in the flesh' of the parish as they tried to get things done. He smiled and said, "You have my full permission to be a 'thorn in the flesh'!". His support was most welcome but J+P members would much prefer to be implementing what is declared parish policy rather than having to persuade or to goad.
  6. If the parish or PCG could decide what the essential elements of a parish social justice ministry were for a period of say two or three years and empowered the J+P group to see them carried out this would not only be more effective but would involve the parish more positively and, we hope, bring more individuals into the group
  7. The group is now down to four active members (three for the time being) and needs to be strengthened if it is to survive.